

The alarm has long been sounded by the scientific community which overwhelmingly warns about the effects of our carbon dioxide emissions on our atmosphere and oceans. Our defense and intelligence communities warn of the threats posed by climate change to national security and international stability. Economists recognize the market distortion of overlooking the costs of carbon pollution.

Let me say a word of appreciation to former Secretary George Schultz, who wrote an excellent piece in the Wall Street Journal pointing out that this is, indeed, a market distortion that favors polluting fossil fuels and gives them an unfair advantage against other forms of energy that would do less damage to our planet.

Of course, government accountants list climate change as a threat to our fiscal stability. Even faith leaders appeal to our moral responsibility to shield communities—and particularly the poorest communities here at home and around the globe—from the devastating effects of carbon pollution on God's Earth.

Now the alarm is sounded by those dedicated to the conservation of America's wild spaces and living creatures. They are warning that thanks to Congress's neglect, change is coming to our planet locally by locality. They are warning that we had better understand and prepare for those changes and do what we can to minimize the eventual havoc.

The American people are not sitting idly by on this. They are demanding action. Three-quarters of those recently surveyed by Stanford University think the Federal Government should do something to reduce the effects of rising sea levels.

My Newport tidal gauge in my home State in the famous sailing port of Newport is up 10 inches since the famous hurricane of 1938. When the next big one comes, that 10 inches is going to mean a lot of additional damage. Americans believe national preparations for the climate change that is around us will more likely help the economy than hurt it, and they are right. These changes will help the economy.

Sixty percent of Americans believe that taking steps now to adapt would actually create more jobs while only 13 percent thought it would create fewer jobs. Sixty percent as opposed to 13 percent of Americans recognize that the real economic strength we will get is by addressing this problem, not by ducking it because of the pressure from the carbon polluters.

Americans clearly see the benefits of adapting for climate change. Again, for those who only care about money, Americans see the economic benefits of addressing climate change.

I will say once again it is time for us in Congress to wake up. We are sleepwalking through history. We are asleep to the urgent demands of our time. It is time to wake up and prepare our na-

tional strategy to protect our Nation's precious resources, protect our coasts and forests and plains, protect our animal and plant life, protect our people and our communities against the inexorable change that looms.

I thank the President and yield the floor. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 32, S. 649, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Robert Menendez, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Richard J. Durbin, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Dianne Feinstein, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher Murphy, Elizabeth Warren.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, 4 months after the horrific day in Newtown where 20 children and 6 educators were senselessly murdered, the Senate is posed to make further progress toward the goal of reducing gun violence. It is a goal that all Americans, regardless of political party or philosophy, should share. I don't know how any parent, any grandparent, or any relative ever gets over the horrific disaster of Newtown.

I thank our ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY. He worked with us, and he

favorably supported two of the measures reported by the Judiciary Committee last month. Senator GRASSLEY helped make sure we had hearings that were substantive and that we had a schedule so we could vote.

I commend Senator COLLINS, who has been my partner as we have moved forward with legislation to combat illegal gun trafficking and straw purchasers who obtain firearms legally but then provide them to criminals and gangs. We have been joined in that bipartisan effort by Senators DURBIN, GILLIBRAND, KIRK, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, BLUMENTHAL, SHAHEEN, and KING.

Our bill is intended to give law enforcement better and more effective tools. A bipartisan majority of the Judiciary Committee voted for the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, S. 54. It has provisions that are included in the Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act, S. 649, which Majority Leader REID placed on the Senate calendar just before the last recess and on which he has now moved to proceed.

Straw purchasers get around the purpose of the background check system. Straw purchasing of firearms is undertaken for just one reason: to get a gun into the hands of someone who is legally prohibited from having one.

We know that many guns used in criminal activities are acquired through straw purchases. It was a straw purchaser who enabled the brutal murders of two brave firefighters in Webster, NY, this past Christmas Eve, and it was a straw purchaser who provided firearms to an individual who murdered a police officer in Plymouth Township, PA, last September. Is it any wonder that law enforcement across this country says: Stop the straw purchasing. We are losing too many brave men and women in law enforcement, to say nothing about all the others who have been killed by drug and criminal cartels.

We need a meaningful solution to this serious problem. We have included suggestions from Senator GILLIBRAND to go after those who traffic in firearms by wrongfully obtaining two or more firearms. We worked hard to develop effective, targeted legislation to help combat a serious problem. We are doing it in a way that protects the second amendment rights of law-abiding Americans.

It was an ATF whistleblower who testified in the last Congress that the existing firearm laws are "toothless." We can create better law enforcement tools, and that is what we are doing with the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act. I urge all Senators to join with us and close this dangerous loophole in the law that Mexican drug cartels, gangs, and other criminals throughout our country have exploited for too long.

I wish to recognize the dedication and leadership of Senator COLLINS of Maine to confront the issue of gun violence. She is not a member of the Judiciary Committee, but she has been